

A review of insect defoliators on teak with special reference to *Paliga damastesalis* Walker in Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Teak is a deciduous hardwood tree species native to India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. It is renowned for its aesthetic qualities, durability and versatility for a wide range of uses including furniture manufacture, ship building, decorative panelling and flooring. However, the tree is predisposed to a spectrum of insect pests particularly when grown as a monoculture or mixed plantation crop. More than 285 insect pests have been reported globally on teak. Of these, defoliators rank highest in the damage caused to teak saplings and plantations, worldwide. These primarily belong to three orders namely Lepidoptera (139), Coleoptera (41) and Orthoptera (18). In Malaysia, 28 insect pests have been reported thus far. Among these, *Paliga damastesalis* Walker (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), *Xyleutes ceramica* Walker (Lepidoptera: Cossidae) and *Hyblaea puera* Cramer (Lepidoptera: Hyblaeidae) are common pests, with *P. damastesalis* as the major defoliator in Malaysia. The effects of defoliation is especially severe in young plantations. Although outbreaks are predominantly seasonal and has been frequently associated with flushing of leaves, the insect remains active throughout the year, with a total of 12 to 13 overlapping generations per year.

Keyword: Insects; Teak; Defoliator